

### Chinese dissident sues police for harassment

BEIJING, Dec 5: A leading dissident said Monday he was suing Beijing police for violating his civil rights, and a Shanghai dissident announced plans to try to resurrect democracy activities in China's largest city, reports AP.

Wang Dan, 25, a top student leader in 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement, appealed for a court order to stop the harassment by Beijing police, which dates back to mid-June. He mailed his suit to the Beijing Intermediate Court on Monday.

"No matter where I go, they follow me," he wrote in his suit. "Because of it, I have no private life to speak of outside my home."

Wang, who served a four-year sentence for his leading role in the 1989 protests, said the men tailing him told him they were from the Beijing Public Security Bureau, but the bureau has never explained the

purpose of the surveillance or produced any legal basis for it. "A citizen's right to privacy, to personal freedom and to reputation all are protected in the constitution," he wrote. "These (police) actions are a violation of my legal rights."

In a sign that police still are keeping a close watch on Wang and tapping his phone line, police called him just a few minutes after he told The Associated Press about the suit. They later visited him in his home and took a copy of the suit, Wang said.

Wang's suit is unlikely to even be considered by a Chinese court. In recent years, other activists have sought court action to try to force the government to treat them fairly under the law, whether it was to get a passport or to fight an arbitrary job transfer. However, not a single suit has been accepted for a court hearing.

## Pakistan eager to buy second N-plant from China

BEIJING, Dec 5: Pakistani President Farooq Leghari said today Islamabad had never purchased M-11 ballistic missiles from China but said it was eager to buy a second nuclear power plant from Beijing, reports Reuter.

Leghari said Pakistan was eager to buy a second nuclear power plant from China but said financial constraints were hampering the purchase.

"Pakistan is getting some technological transfers and help from the Chinese in setting up a first nuclear power plant, but we do need another plant," Leghari said, adding that Islamabad wanted a plant similar to one already being built in central Pakistan.

Pakistan began construction last year of a 300-megawatt nuclear plant in central Punjab

province with Chinese aid and technology.

"If we can arrive at suitable terms of credit, which may be available from commercial sources, we may perhaps go ahead with a second plant," Leghari said.

Islamabad had asked Beijing for a soft loan to enable it to buy a second Chinese plant, Pakistan sources said.

As far as the M-11 is concerned both Pakistan and China have very clearly told the entire world time and time again that we have not acquired M-11 missiles from China and neither have they sold us M-11 missiles," he told a news conference.

Pakistan had obtained some missiles from China but these purchases did not violate the missile technology control

regime, Leghari said. "Pakistan has been buying some weapons systems from China, mainly mid-technology systems," he said.

Defence Minister Aftab Shabaan Mirani held separate talks with Chinese defence officials during the visit but no details of those meetings were available.

Leghari held talks with Communist Party chief and President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng.

Allegations that China has sold to Pakistan missile technology to make M-11 ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads in violation of Beijing's non-proliferation pledges are a source of friction in both countries' ties with the United States.

Washington bars some mili-

tary transfers to China and stopped all arms exports to Pakistan in 1990, suspecting it of trying to make nuclear weapons, Islamabad denies the charge.

Pakistan has bought Chinese arms since the 1960s and obtained unspecified new credits from Beijing for further defence purchases when Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto visited China in late 1993.

Asked to comment on whether China was providing adequate support to Pakistan in resolving its row with India over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, Leghari said Beijing could help by persuading New Delhi toward a peaceful solution.

The Chinese leadership have asked the Indian leaders to try and arrive at a peaceful settlement," Leghari said.

### Off the Record



A 7.5 metre python curls around its 124 eggs laid over 13 hours on Friday in Jakarta's Ragunan Zoo. The number of eggs is thought to be a world record for pythons in captivity according to a review of scientific literature conducted by the zoo. The 20-year-old python, which hails from south Sumatra and weighs 180 kilograms, will not eat for the next two months while it incubates its eggs. —AFP photo

### 'Worst accident caused by language barrier'

SYDNEY: Surgeons involved in an operation in an Australian hospital removed the wrong lung from a patient because of a misunderstanding caused by his inability to speak adequate English, a Canberra MP said Sunday, reports AFP.

Andrew Theophanous, a doctor as well as parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Paul Keating, described the incident, which happened two years ago, as the worst example of accidents caused by a language barrier.

It demonstrated the need to improve interpretation services in Australian hospitals and in other areas such as the justice system, he said.

Theophanous, who was speaking to journalists after delivering a report to the federation of ethnic communities councils meeting in Hobart, would not reveal the hospital or the name of the patient. Nor was the fate of the patient disclosed.

### Santa goes on-line!

SYDNEY: Are those elves cruising the electronic highway? Santa's helpers no longer have to wade through mountains of paper or decipher impossible handwriting to discover what children want for Christmas, because Santa's gone on-line, reports AP.

Now computer-literate children can send their wish lists to Santa's Internet address via electronic mail and receive a personal reply.

The service is offered by Softway, one of Australia's largest UNIX system software companies.

### Pak police halt TNSM rally

PESHAWAR, Dec 5: Pakistani police fired tear-gas to halt thousands of Islamic militants marching on a jail on Sunday demanding the release of protesters, witnesses and police said, reports Reuter.

Around 2,500 militants marched on Mingora jail in the North West Frontier Province seeking freedom for 85 colleagues arrested during a violent campaign last month for the enforcement of Sharia Islamic Laws, the witnesses said.

Troops blocked the path of several thousand more militants of the Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-ul-Mohammadi (TNSM) organisation at Matta, some 35km (20 miles) to the north, to prevent them joining the protesters at Mingora, they added.

The tear-gassing stopped the marchers at Mingora but failed to disperse the crowd.

### Lankan violence continues: 5 die

COLOMBO (Sri Lanka), Dec 5: Three security personnel and two guerrillas have been killed in the ethnic war that has persisted despite efforts to restart peace talks, officials said Monday, reports AP.

A policeman and a paramilitary home guard were shot dead during a rebel attack on a bunker shortly before midnight Sunday in the Ampara district, 200 kilometers (123 miles) east of Colombo, said a military spokesman. In a separate attack on a military bunker, the rebels killed one soldier Sunday night at Eiyakachchi, 290 kilometers (179 miles) north of the capital.

On Saturday, government forces destroyed two rebel boats and killed at least two guerrillas in separate clashes.

### Swiss pass new law to crackdown on aliens

BERN, Dec 5: Swiss voters on Sunday overwhelmingly approved a new law giving police extra powers to crackdown on illegal immigrants and people abusing the country's political asylum laws, according to official results of a referendum, reports AP.

Almost 73 per cent of voters backed a measure passed by parliament earlier this year which allows the authorities to hold illegal aliens and asylum seekers for up to 12 months instead of three.

Opponents of the law — which they brand racist — forced a referendum by collecting the requisite 50,000 signatures under Swiss law.

The 'yes' vote won in every single canton, opponents per-

forming strongest in Geneva, where they took 47.7 per cent of the vote.

The 'no' vote lobby had expected defeat and had already warned it will monitor enforcement of the law to guard against abuses.

Observers said the victory of the 'yes' vote and the 42 per cent turnout — relatively high for a referendum — marked voter anger over the country's mounting drugs problem and what they perceive to be abuses of Switzerland's asylum laws.

"The people voted almost in a fury," said Zurich socialist deputy Andreas Gross, one of the law's opponents. Voters in his nominally left-leaning city approved the law by a massive 80.7 per cent.



British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd (R) and French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe (L) listen as Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic (C) briefs the press after the leaders' talks on Sunday in Belgrade. Milosevic welcomed the contact group's latest change to its 'final' plan, giving Bosnian Serbs the right to confederate with Serbia. — AFP photo

### Russia deploys more troops to increase pressure on Chechnya

GROZNY, Dec 5: Russia has sent more troops and heavy weaponry to the borders of Chechnya, increasing pressure on the breakaway region to stop defying the Kremlin, reports Reuter.

Moscow has been flying soldiers to areas neighbouring Chechnya in southern Russia since threatening last week to clamp down unless the government, which declared independence in 1991, and opposition forces lay down their arms.

Russia has not directly intervened so far. But on Sunday it continued flying troops to Vladikavkaz in neighbouring north Ossetia and Reuter reports saw long lines of tanks

and armoured vehicles in areas close to the Chechen border.

The troops are more than 100 km (62 miles) from the Chechen capital Grozny. But the build up prompted Russian Khasbulatov, the Chechen former chairman of the Russian parliament and an ally of the Moscow-backed Chechen opposition, to abandon what he said were his efforts to defuse the confrontation.

"Russia is bringing in troops. As you know I was always against this development in events," Khasbulatov said on Sunday before leaving Chechnya.

"My role has been made superfluous — the role of an observer of events which I can no

longer influence," he said.

Meanwhile AP from Moscow adds: Russia's top security chiefs left Monday for the border of the breakaway republic of Chechnya, where Russian troops are concentrating.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, Interior Minister Viktor Yerin and Counterintelligence Chief Sergei Stepashin were headed for North Ossetia, the ITAR-Tass news agency said. North Ossetia neighbours Chechnya in the Caucasus Mountains of southern Russia.

Vladimir Shumeiko, head of the upper house of Russia's parliament, said Monday that hopes of a negotiated settlement are dim.



US Secretary of Treasury Lloyd Bentsen (L) received the Ambassador of Bangladesh Humayun Kabir in the Treasury Department recently to review US-Bangladesh bilateral relations.

### France arrests Libyan national in UTA bomb case

CAIRO, Dec 5: France has arrested a Libyan national in connection with the 1989 bombing of a French airliner over the Sahara Desert, the French and Libyan governments said on Sunday, reports AP.

French Interior Ministry confirmed that Ali Omar Mansour was arrested on Friday in Paris and has been in police custody since.

Disclosure of the arrest was made earlier on Sunday by the official Libyan news agency, JANA, when it complained that Mansour had been arrested "in an arbitrary manner."

The French government said Mansour was being questioned by anti-terrorism judge Jean Louis Burgulere.

It was not known what connection Mansour might have had to the bombing.

## BRIEFLY

**Chinese hotel fire kills 11:** A hotel fire killed 11 people and injured 38 others in coastal China's Shandong province, an official report said on Monday, AP reports from Beijing.

It took nearly 100 firefighters from 12 brigades nearly an hour to bring the fire under control. Firefighters save 30 people trapped in Binzhou's Yinyun Guesthouse, the Legal Daily said. It said the fire started at 4 am November 30, but did not give other details.

**2 die in Russian chopper crash:** Two people died in a helicopter crash in Bashkiriya in eastern Russia on Sunday and three people were badly injured, the ITAR-Tass news agency said, AP reports from Moscow.

It said the Mi-2 crashed near the town of Sterlitamak, 1.125 kilometres (700 miles) southeast of Moscow. Two pilots and three passengers were aboard the helicopter, the dispatch said, without giving additional details.

**Yemeni tribal clashes claim 3:** Three tribesmen were killed and 11 others wounded in clashes between two clans locked in a land dispute in northern Yemen, tribal leaders in the region said on Sunday, AFP reports from Sanaa.

The Bani Nawf and Al Hamad clans belonging to the Baqil tribal confederation, clashed on Thursday and Friday, the sources said. The authorities did not try to halt the fighting by force but tried to mediate between the two sides.

**Merapi volcano re-erupts:** Indonesia's Merapi volcano, which killed more than 50 people when it erupted last month, has spewed lava and debris again, the official Antara news agency said yesterday, Reuter reports from Jakarta.

It quoted officials in the central Javanese town of Magelang as saying the crater of the 3,000 metre (9,800 foot) volcano spilled lava about 18 times on Sunday.

**Opposition gains in Italian polls:** Centre-left opposition candidates won mayoral run-off races in four of six big Italian towns in local elections seen as a key test of political strength, state television reported on Sunday, Reuter says from Rome.

In the northern town of Brescia, former Christian Democrat leader Mino Martinazzoli won 56.5 per cent of the vote to defeat industry minister Vito Gnuttoli of the Northern League who took 43.5 per cent with all votes counted, the report said. Opposition candidates secured comfortable wins in the northern town of Sondrio and Massa in Tuscany while another of their men won by a whisker in Brindisi in the southeast.

**Albanian cabinet reshuffled:** President Sali Berisha, stung by voters' rejection of his proposed constitution, is replacing 10 of 19 ministers in the Albanian government, state media reported, AP says from Tirana.

Loss of the November 6 referendum on the constitution, for which Berisha had campaigned hard, was viewed as a reflection of disenchantment with Berisha's Democrats. Berisha kept Prime Minister Aleksander Meksi, and the defence and foreign ministers. He named two new deputy prime ministers, a new minister of justice and a new finance minister, said the news reports Sunday.

**8 freeze to death in Bulgaria:** Eight people froze to death and 10 were taken to hospital in serious condition after they got lost in the Balkan mountain range, Tara Plazina, in Bulgaria, a mountain rescue official said on Sunday, Reuter reports from Sofia.

The victims were part of a group of 48 from Kurdzhali in southern Bulgaria which set off on Friday for a mountain hut. The hut turned out to be closed for repair and only part of the group made it to the next hut where they raised the alarm on Saturday morning.

**Khamenei's candidature okayed:** Iranian members of parliament have backed statements by two leading theological bodies naming Iran's spiritual leader Ali Khamenei among candidates qualified to be the world's highest Shi'ite Muslim authority, the official news agency IRNA reported, Reuter says from Nicosia.

Since the death of Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Araki on Tuesday, many top Iranian religious leaders have said Khamenei should succeed him as 'marja taqlid' (source of emulation).

## NATO, ethnic disputes overshadow CSCE summit

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Dec 5: Fuming over NATO expansion plans that isolate it from Europe, Russia prepared to argue its case on Monday at a 52-nation summit grappling for ways to prevent further European wars, reports AP.

Although it was not on the agenda, NATO's plan to expand toward Russian borders and Moscow's opposition to that overshadowed the opening of a two-day summit meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"Russia is against the expansion of (NATO's) sphere of influence ... to the east," Russian President Boris Yeltsin said on Sunday in Moscow before departing for the Hungarian capital. "NATO's frontiers will reach the border of the Russian Federation."

"We have just stopped existing as two blocs," he said. "But they may re-emerge in Eu-

rope."

Russia's membership in the CSCE is its only major link to other European nations. Other major CSCE members from Western Europe and North America also belong to NATO, the European Union or both. Both these organisations plan to welcome former Soviet bloc countries, but not Russia.

Opening speeches at the conference touched on the dangers of a Europe fraught with ethnic and territorial disputes from Bosnia to the former Soviet republics.

"The European continent is beset with tensions and antagonisms, which in various regions threaten international peace," said UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The empty seat next to him was a stark reminder of the failure of international organisations like the CSCE and the United Nations first to pre-

vent, then to end, the Bosnian war.

Yugoslavia, the usual occupant of the chair, has been suspended from the CSCE because of its aid to rebel Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia.

Prime Minister Gyula Horn of Hungary suggested that NATO, the European Union and the CSCE could all play important roles.

"We are convinced that it is not rivalry but cooperation between these institutions that can serve genuine security of Europe," he said.

President Clinton is making a short, high-profile visit to Budapest for the summit.

Yeltsin and Clinton will watch Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma sign the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which marks a significant reversal in nuclear weapons stockpiling.

The long range missiles

stockpiled by the United States and four former Soviet republics — Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan — will be reduced by about one-third. The stage will then be set for US Senate action on the START II treaty and its provisions for deeper, 50 per cent, reductions.

Before the summit ends, Clinton, Yeltsin and their counterparts from Canada and Europe are also supposed to approve a document broadly outlining ways to calm festering tensions in Europe before they erupt into wars like Bosnia.

But diplomats preparing the document said Russia, apparently fearful of losing influence in Europe, was holding up agreement on several key sections.

Moscow was protesting language condemning Serb attacks on the UN safe area of

Bihac in northern Bosnia, unless the conference agreed to ease conditions on the return of Yugoslavia to the CSCE. Russia is a traditional ally of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

Russia was also dug in over the wording on the role CSCE would have in policing any peacekeeping force sent into a conflict region. Moscow wants to have a relatively free hand in regulating unrest in the former Soviet republics it used to dominate.

Russia has long sought to make the CSCE the premier security organisation in Europe. The United States favours a more assertive CSCE, though not at the expense of NATO.

Created in 1975, the CSCE was the only institution in which NATO and the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact came together to discuss security and human rights issues.

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